

Melancon's Request for Mobile Health Care Clinic to Aid Oil Workers and Residents Granted
May 29, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced that the federal government will deploy a temporary health care clinic to south Louisiana to treat and screen workers and residents affected by the oil leak in the Gulf. The federal commitment of health care services was [confirmed yesterday in a letter](#) from Secretary of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius (see attached).

For the past two weeks, Congressman Melancon has been asking the Administration [to send temporary clinics](#) to his Congressional District's rural coastal areas to treat the people being exposed to hazardous materials and toxic fumes. In his meeting yesterday with President Obama, Congressman Melancon again repeated this request.

“We are seeing a growing need for health care services for those responders working around the clock to combat this disaster,” said Rep. Melancon. “Professional crews and volunteers are being exposed to hazardous fumes and potentially dangerous dispersants every day, and there is no health care infrastructure in place to treat them and monitor their symptoms. Now they’ll be able to get treatment right when they step off a boat or a beach.

“Getting this clinic for South Louisiana shows that we can cut through red tape and get support to the people who need it most during this disaster. We have got to keep pushing to do more and work faster.”

The clinic will provide medical checkups to people who have come in contact with hazardous materials and also assist in monitoring the health effects of the oil leak on south Louisianians.

This week, several crewmembers of three vessels involved in oil recovery work reported experiencing nausea, dizziness, headaches and chest pains and were transported to West Jefferson Hospital in Marrero, La. From Breton Sound Marina, where the workers were stationed, to West Jefferson Hospital is an hour drive or more ([see map](#)), depending on traffic conditions. One of the workers had to be MEDEVACed by air to the hospital.

President Barack Obama traveled to Grand Isle, La., yesterday for a briefing led by U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen on the efforts to stop the BP oil leak and prevent the oil from reaching Louisiana's coastal marshes. Congressman Melancon reiterated the need for a temporary clinic to President Obama in their meeting. Congressman Melancon also asked the President for more military boom and to designate a high-ranking federal official with decision-making authority to clear the red tape hindering disaster response.

Congressman Melancon has worked to bring federal attention to the health needs of Louisianians impacted by the oil leak in the Gulf. Last week, Congressman Melancon sent a letter to the Administration requesting assistance in [increasing mental health services](#) in the region to help residents cope with the BP oil disaster in the Gulf. Congressman Melancon has

hosted two recent town hall meetings in south Louisiana where he has heard from residents who are starting to display symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

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